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FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS STAFF

PROGRAM McLaughlin One-on-One STATION WRC-TV  
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SUBJECT Interview with Senator Leahy

JOHN MCLAUGHLIN: This Senator says the United States is making a mistake if it gives aid to the Contras in Nicaragua, the freedom fighters, as President Reagan calls them. Is he right?

Born, Montpelier, Vermont. Forty-five years of age. Wife, Marcel. Two sons, one daughter. Roman Catholic. St. Michael's College, B.A. Georgetown University, Doctor of Laws. Practicing attorney, eight years. Chittendon County, Vermont, state's attorney, eight years. U.S. Senate, 11 years. Reelected 1980, 50 percent of the vote: Appropriations, Agriculture, Judiciary, and Intelligence Committees. Strong believer that SALT II should be complied with by the United States as long as the Soviet Union does so, even though we have unratified it and it expires in December.

SENATOR PATRICK LEAHY: There are no limits. There is nothing to stop the most unbelievable arms race, nuclear arms race, this world's ever seen.

MCLAUGHLIN: Deputy Democratic Senate Whip, Vice Chairman Select Committee on Intelligence, directing the review of CIA and FBI operations, with access to all U.S. intelligence data. A stern critic of U.S. aid to help the Contras fighting the Sandinista government in Nicaragua.

SENATOR LEAHY: Some of these things, the White House is more interested in rhetoric than reality. And eventually the reality will catch up with the rhetoric, and maybe they'll start talking something substantive.

MCLAUGHLIN: Americans for Democratic Action, ADA, liberal rating 1984, 95 percent; career, 84 percent.

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Patrick Joseph Leahy. It's one-on-one.

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MCLAUGHLIN: You are a camera buff. Right?

SENATOR LEAHY: Well, I enjoy photography.

MCLAUGHLIN: And you've made photographs available, they've been published in national periodicals?

SENATOR LEAHY: Yeah. I once said to somebody I much prefer seeing my byline on a photograph in a national news magazine than I do seeing my name in a national news magazine.

MCLAUGHLIN: This week, Senator, the United States Senate voted in favor of Contra aid in a pretty clear majority, 55 to 42. In view of your ongoing positions on this subject, are you disappointed in that vote?

SENATOR LEAHY: Well, I'm disappointed because what they said, in effect, is send the CIA down, put them back into the Contra war. That means every time a report comes back of a Contra atrocity or anything else, then eventually the CIA gets stained with that, even though the CIA people, I'm convinced, have very carefully followed the law, have not violated American law in any way.

But if the thing falls apart, as it will, if the stated goal is to have the Contras overturn Managua, then the CIA ends up getting the blame.

My concern is if things go wrong -- they say the Contras, and the Contras tell me they intend to overthrow the Sandinista government. We have the CIA in to do it. If that doesn't work, you're not going to find anybody in the White House saying, "Gee. I made a mistake." You're not going to see the State Department say, "I made a mistake." You're not going to see the Congress say, "I made a mistake." You're going to have everybody say, "Gosh. Didn't the CIA screw up again?" And I think that's unfair to them.

MCLAUGHLIN: Do I read you right? Are you absolving the CIA of any misconduct down there, when you take into account that the harbors were mined and that a manual was provided for...

SENATOR LEAHY: No, no. I say the CIA, on the questions of atrocities, the things we've had, the murders of people and all that, I do absolve them of that. Yes. They've followed the law, very clearly. They've stayed out of that.

I made very clear my feelings about the manual, that

they never should have sent that down. In fact, I've asked for a very thorough review at the CIA how that thing ever got out there in the first place.

MCLAUGHLIN: How do you account for the shift in sentiment in the United States Senate, and probably next week in the House of Representatives, on the subject of Contra aid? What's happened?

SENATOR LEAHY: Well, the United States Senate, by and large, with one exception, has supported the President on this and has gone along with what the President's said. There hasn't been any foreign policy, certainly not any major foreign policy issue, or economic issue, or any other issue, in the past five years that the Senate has not agreed with President Reagan.

MCLAUGHLIN: Do you find that the Congress has become disenchanted with Ortega, rather than developing any case of affection for the Contras? Ortega bounding over to Moscow, and then the other Eastern European bloc nations.

SENATOR LEAHY: Well, Mr. McLaughlin, a lot of people had the idea, and I think especially at the White House, that if you didn't like the Contras, then you must love the Sandinistas. And what I pointed out over and over again to them during the past four or five years, at least in the Senate, I couldn't find two people in the Senate, on either party, who were supporters of the Sandinistas. That doesn't mean that they love the Contras because they don't like the Sandinistas.

Certainly that trip to Moscow, a lot of people were saying that hurt. A lot of people who wanted to go with the Administration anyway would say that.

But the mistake that was made -- and in setting this policy, one of the basic mistakes that was made in trying to set a policy for Nicaragua, is the idea that if you don't like the Sandinistas, you must love the Contras. Well, they don't realize a lot of people don't like either one.

MCLAUGHLIN: Tell me briefly, Senator, because I want to talk about espionage, tell me briefly about SALT II and the question of whether or not the United States should comply with this treaty. The President has to make a decision, probably by Monday, I believe, and there are various things he can do. He can decide to build and not deploy, or he can decide to build and deploy and take one out and put one in. Thus, if he wants to float the Trident, he has to dismantle a Poseidon.

What do you think he's going to do? What do you think he should do?

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SENATOR LEAHY: Or cut back on -- or cut back on Minuteman IIIs...

MCLAUGHLIN: If you were in his shoes, what would you do?

SENATOR LEAHY: Well, I would try to keep within the limits of SALT II, so long as the Soviets were doing that. This is the only control we have. They're the only numbers that control us. And so long as we have people in Geneva, it's the only thing to set some starting point. Otherwise, you've got no starting point.

Now, on the question of what I think the President would do. I suspect he'll take a Poseidon out, stick it in drydock, open up the ports.

MCLAUGHLIN: If he puts it in drydock, does that satisfy the terms of the agreement?

SENATOR LEAHY: No.

MCLAUGHLIN: You think he will do that. Would you do that if you were President?

SENATOR LEAHY: I'm not President. That's a moot point. I never answer questions of what I'd do if I was President.

MCLAUGHLIN: You have access to all intelligence data. Right?

SENATOR LEAHY: That's right.

MCLAUGHLIN: Everything. The whole ball of wax.

SENATOR LEAHY: Supposed to have.

MCLAUGHLIN: Presumptively, you do. Right?

SENATOR LEAHY: Uh-huh.

MCLAUGHLIN: That being the question, you must know that the Soviets -- we cannot verify what the Soviets are doing over there. Doesn't that give you pause for taking the position that you take on compliance with SALT II?

SENATOR LEAHY: Can't verify what they're doing on what part of SALT II?

MCLAUGHLIN: Let us say...

SENATOR LEAHY: Are you saying, for example, that we couldn't count the number of submarines they have?

MCLAUGHLIN: Well, not only that, but I'm also saying that we can't count the number of missiles they have.

SENATOR LEAHY: Well, if we can't count the number of submarines, then the CIA has certainly been not only deceiving us and the Secretary of...

MCLAUGHLIN: Let me...

SENATOR LEAHY: ...but we've been wasting an awful lot of money doing things that the government says they can do.

Maybe the better question might be is what I think that we should have in an arms agreement. We should not enter into an arms agreement that is not verifiable, verifiable by means that we have control over.

I don't trust the Soviets. The Soviets don't trust us. No arms agreement is ever going to go through the United States Senate unless it is verifiable.

MCLAUGHLIN: Let me repeat the question. Would you go for an arms agreement that does not permit on-site -- does not require on-site verification.

SENATOR LEAHY: It depends upon what it is. Some things should have on-site verification, especially -- for example, the MBFR.

MCLAUGHLIN: Right.

SENATOR LEAHY: I think there are some areas of that that should have on-site verification. If a particular question is going to be how many launchers, for example, to be in a particular area, it doesn't make any difference whether you have on-site or not, because you can do that by national technical means.

If it's the number of submarines that go out of a certain port, you could do that by national technical means.

I think, as some of these weapons systems change and as some of the things change, whether it's in the intermediate-range matters of if it's in MBFR, some on-site inspection is going to be necessary. When we do that, though, of course, there's the quid pro quo the Soviets ask for here.

So I would look at that case-by-case-by-case.

If the only way you can have verification is on-site, then of course we have to have it. If you can do it by national technical means, I'd rather do it that way than to invite them over here.

MCLAUGHLIN: From this vast amount of data that you have access to, don't you know that you cannot really verify without on-site inspections in a certain number of cases?

SENATOR LEAHY: Well, of course.

MCLAUGHLIN: And without that, therefore, you really cannot have a treaty.

SENATOR LEAHY: I'm saying if we have the treaties that are being discussed now in Geneva, there are some aspects of that that may well require on-site verification. On SALT II, on the basic aspects of SALT II, we've been told by the Defense Department, by the CIA, and by everybody else involved that we can verify it by national technical means. I believe we can.

I believe that there may well be some things in the future that we're going to want to limit that will require on-site verification. If that's the case, then that's what we have to do.

MCLAUGHLIN: When we come back I want to talk to you about espionage.

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MCLAUGHLIN: The Navy spy -- family spy ring, really, the three Walkers and Jerry Whitworth, has commanded national attention during the past couple of weeks. What are the aspects of this? The number of people who are cleared for top secret or near-top secret security, is that one of the problems? There are, what, 4.2 million people?

SENATOR LEAHY: Four million people cleared for top secret, or cleared for various levels of classification. Twenty million documents a year that are classified in one form or another. That's ridiculous. Far too many people are cleared. There's far too much access. We don't take it seriously enough.

MCLAUGHLIN: How much should they be cut back, 50 percent?

SENATOR LEAHY: Well, I would...

MCLAUGHLIN: That would be two million. That's an awful lot of people too, isn't it?

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SENATOR LEAHY: I would think that we could, but then be more selective of what we classify. We end up classifying stuff, sometimes, to cover people's mistakes.

MCLAUGHLIN: Yes.

SENATOR LEAHY: It's getting so much stuff is classified, routinely classified, that you almost have to have a clearance even to do your job.

Well, as a result, if everything's classified, nothing's classified, because nobody takes it seriously.

MCLAUGHLIN: How much damage has been done by the spy ring?

SENATOR LEAHY: I think enormous damage. Ask yourself this question: What do you think we would have given if we could have gone into the Soviet Union and got people with the kind of access that they have and got them to give that material to us? We would have considered it one of the biggest coups of this decade?

MCLAUGHLIN: Are we talking about findability of submarines, or are we talking about cryptography? Or are we talking about both?

SENATOR LEAHY: Now you're going into an area that I'm really not at liberty to go into. But just consider where these people are, and consider the fact that the most invulnerable part of our triad, our nuclear triad, and the thing that we watch the most on the Soviets, in both instances, submarines. And just think of what they've given away.

MCLAUGHLIN: The most secure part of the triad is the underwater fleet of submarines.

SENATOR LEAHY: Absolutely.

MCLAUGHLIN: And now...

SENATOR LEAHY: The most undetectable.

MCLAUGHLIN: And now there is a measure of vulnerability that has developed because of this spy ring.

SENATOR LEAHY: I believe there is.

MCLAUGHLIN: Let me ask you this: What about our counterintelligence activity? Can the blame be placed at anyone's door?

SENATOR LEAHY: Well, if it goes on for the number of years -- and I'm speaking now based just on what's been in the public press. And I want to emphasize answers are based on things that are in the public press. But if you take that as a fact, 17-18 years, how can anybody in the Navy claim they're not negligent in not rediscovering it or not finding out what's going on during that time?

Sure, the blame can be laid there. But I hope that we don't make the mistake of spending all our time trying to spin out who's at fault. We ought to spend a little bit of time finding out what we do in the future.

MCLAUGHLIN: Is it a defect of law that has brought this situation around, or is it a defect, as we have indicated, I guess, thus far, it's more a matter of procedure and process and practice that is at fault?

SENATOR LEAHY: Well, procedure, process, practice. But also what you want to focus on. I mean we can make a big thing of cashiering an admiral because he shows up in a command a few months after somebody bought a \$600 ashtray. I'm a heck of a lot more concerned that somebody gives away billions of dollars worth of secrets.

MCLAUGHLIN: What kind of law changes are needed? As a matter of fact, on Friday of this week you were responsible for co-sponsoring a law with Senator Cohen. Is that correct?

SENATOR LEAHY: The Leahy-Cohen Amendment would cut back substantially the number of Soviets in this country with diplomatic immunity.

MCLAUGHLIN: There are 1400 now?

SENATOR LEAHY: Yes. And about a thousand -- we estimate that nearly a thousand Soviets or people from Soviet Blocs are active Soviet intelligence agents.

Now, you know, when you say that, when you give that number -- and I've been doing this for years. People sort of throw up their hands and say, "Well, this is some kind of a thing out of a 1950s right-wing fantasy." What nobody wants to accept in this fact is that we are a primary target, we are the primary target of Soviet espionage. They have been operating here in good times and bad, through detente and not through detente. And they continue to do it, and we don't take it seriously enough.

We have -- let me give you an idea. We're supposed to, by law, the Department of Defense is supposed to go back and



check these people with security clearances every five years. They're about 17 years behind now. If they were to do that today and go and just follow what they're supposed to do, it would take them 10 years to...

MCLAUGHLIN: Would you like to see more U.S. personnel in Moscow to complement the number of Soviets who are in this country?

SENATOR LEAHY: Either that or less Soviets in this country.

One of the things is that we have -- we have done some things, and a lot of it through the Senate Intelligence Committee. We do have the Leahy-Cohen Amendment that passed this afternoon. I think that's going to help.

MCLAUGHLIN: What does it provide for?

SENATOR LEAHY: It provides -- it says that the Soviets cannot have more people with diplomatic immunity in this country than we can have in their country.

MCLAUGHLIN: Does the State Department support you in that?

SENATOR LEAHY: No.

MCLAUGHLIN: Why?

SENATOR LEAHY: I don't know. Quite frankly, I don't know. Maybe they think that we can talk about these things and handle it as a diplomatic matter. I think that's balderdash.

MCLAUGHLIN: Do you think that they feel that this is going to exert an unwarranted indisposition on them because of the ongoing talks?

SENATOR LEAHY: I think they may feel that it may upset the diplomatic niceties that go on, insofar as the Soviets could give a darn about diplomatic niceties. I think we ought to be a little tougher with them.

MCLAUGHLIN: If I didn't know you had an ADA rating of 95, I would think that you were a hard-liner, the way you're talking.

Now let me ask you this question. Were you in the government when Frank Church was complaining and criticizing the CIA, in some instances correctly, in other instances perhaps excessively?

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SENATOR LEAHY: I became a Senator January 3rd, 1975.

MCLAUGHLIN: Did you live through that era when the CIA was going through that period?

SENATOR LEAHY: Oh, absolutely. I saw a lot of it.

MCLAUGHLIN: Where were you standing?

SENATOR LEAHY: A lot of it, I was standing as a prosecutor, prosecuting people for armed robberies and murders and crimes like that without access to this.

I will speak to what I do. And I think Senator Church and a number of others brought out, and Senator Goldwater, who was part of that same committee, brought out some real problems in the CIA.

MCLAUGHLIN: Do you think it went too far?

SENATOR LEAHY: What I have done, what I have done since I've been there is try to work to improve their capability. And we have.

Let me give you an idea. Since I've been on the Intelligence Committee, the intelligence budget has grown the fastest it ever has. Also, we have put more money into counterintelligence than we've ever had, more money than the Administration has asked for. And now, one of the reasons we've done that is we're finally seeing the fruits of it. By putting money in for that part of our intelligence services that can go out and detect spies, we're actually catching some.

Now, we've done our part. I think the Congress has done its part. It's improved our ability to catch them. We've got the Leahy-Cohen thing. Now let's see the Administration do what they can do.

MCLAUGHLIN: One quick question, because we've got to get out. I want to talk about Christopher Boyce, the young spy who appears in The Falcon and the Snowman, and what he has to say. But one quick question: Are you satisfied that the FBI has enough power to infiltrate suspect organizations, or would you like to see an expansion of that authority?

SENATOR LEAHY: I think what they need is more people in the counterintelligence area. And then they've got to go with what they have.

MCLAUGHLIN: But they're hamstrung on getting into these organizations, are they not?

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SENATOR LEAHY: Oh, listen. What they spent was -- there was a time when they'd go down through and, "Let's check the Hippies. Let's check these people that sit out on the Mall."

MCLAUGHLIN: They carried it to excess.

SENATOR LEAHY: "Let's investigate...."

MCLAUGHLIN: But aren't they too deprived now?

SENATOR LEAHY: I'd a darn sight rather they spent their time going after Soviet agents than looking for some flower child that holds up a sign saying, "I don't like the President," Democrat or Republican.

And now, now they're actually taking the people that we have and going after them.

MCLAUGHLIN: When we come back I want to talk about Christopher Boyce, because he was a Soviet agent, and hear what he has to say.

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MCLAUGHLIN: Christopher Boyce was 21 years of age when he was involved in spying for the Soviet Union. He was convicted at the age of 24, and he's 31 today. His father was an FBI agent. He was sentenced to 40 years in March of 1975. He stayed at Lompoc prison for a while, then he escaped. He was on the loose for 18 months. He was recaptured in August of '81. He's now been sentenced to 68 years in solitary confinement in Marion, Illinois penitentiary.

Six weeks ago he gave testimony before the Senate Subcommittee on Investigations, and he described how he, when he was working at the TRW Corporation, appeared with an assembly of workers, and what was told to him by a government employee about espionage. And then he described what it's really like.

This is a rather long tape bite. It runs about two minutes. And as I say, it took place before the Senate panel on investigations. I'd like to have you watch it.

CHRISTOPHER BOYCE: When I was at TRW, I and several hundred other relatively fresh employees were given a group talk on the perils of espionage. A clean-cut all-American type addressed us from the podium. Here I sat with the KGB monkey already on my back, surrounded by all these young people who were being fed totally inaccurate and inappropriate descriptions of espionage. They were given the impression that espionage was some exotic, glamorous escapade. Handsome Slav spies would

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seduce young American secretaries on their vacations in Brussels and bend them into secret agents for the KGB.

It was surreal. A government spokesman, automatically accepted by everyone as competent, stood there entertaining all those naive, impressionable youngsters around me with tales of secret adventure, intrigue, huge payoffs, exotic weaponry, seduction, poison, hair-raising risks, deadly gadgetry. It was a whole potpourri of James Bond lunacy. When, in fact, almost everything he said was totally foreign to what was actually happening to me.

Where was the despair? Where were the sweaty palms and shaky hands? This man said nothing about having to wake up in the morning with a gut-gripping fear before steeling yourself once again for the ordeal of going back into that vault.

None of them knew, as I did, that there was no excitement, there was no thrill. There was only depressions and a hopeless enslavement to an inhuman, uncaring foreign bureaucracy.

For whatever reason a person begins his involvement, a week after the folly begins the original intent and purpose becomes lost in the ignomy [sic] of the ongoing nightmare.

Be it to give your life meaning or to make a political statement, be it to seek adventure or to pay delinquent alimony, be it for whatever reason, see a lawyer or a psychiatrist or a priest, or even a reporter; but don't see a KGB agent. That is a solution to nothing.

MCLAUGHLIN: He's saying that espionage ought to be demythologized. It's not James Bond 007 and the glamor. It's a terrible, critical, crucial agony.

What do you say to him?

SENATOR LEAHY: I have absolutely no sympathy for him, whatsoever. He should have thought of that before he went into it. He sold out his country. He broke his own oath of secrecy on this. As far as I'm concerned, they should lock him up and throw the key away.

MCLAUGHLIN: When we come back I'm going to ask you the mega-question.

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MCLAUGHLIN: You've got access to all secret data, so you can use all of that in your answer to this question: Do you

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think the United States will invade Nicaragua before the end of Ronald Reagan's second term?

Forget that secret data. What's your intuition?

SENATOR LEAHY: I think that so long as we think that our policy should be to overturn the Sandinistas, and if we really want to pull out that policy, it's only going to be done if we send in American troops. And I think that would be a colossal mistake.

MCLAUGHLIN: Do you think the Sandinistas will be in office -- forget invasion -- will they be in office, or is that government going to collapse before the end of Ronald Reagan's second term?

SENATOR LEAHY: So long as we give them a reason to ask for support from their people because we're invading, they may stay in office. Absent that, who knows?

MCLAUGHLIN: Thanks so much for your appearance here today, Senator.